

Woman uses hidden camera to expose life under IS

by [Anne Steele](#)

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([The Christian Science Monitor](#)) A woman in a full niqab veil walks with a toddler to the children's playground in Raqqa, Syria—an AK-47 slung over her shoulder.

There is no music, no entertainment in the streets. Businesses are closed, forced to shut down multiple times a day for prayers.

Such is life in the Islamic State-controlled city of Raqqa, as shown through the lens of a woman living there. The northern Syrian city has been in the clutches of the militant Islamist group for more than a year, and the footage was recorded by an unidentified Syrian woman for news station France 2. She agreed to hide a camera in her IS-mandated black niqab as she walked through sections of the city.

The footage, narrated in French and dubbed in English, offers glimpses of daily life: busy streets filled with cars and bicycles, a market with piles of vegetables, and the predominance of men in public areas, many of them brandishing guns.

At one point, the woman filming is noticed by a religious police officer. He reprimands her because he can see her face. "You have to pay attention by covering up," he says. "God loves women who are covered."

While some women in Raqqa are suffering under such repression, an increasing number of foreign women have traded their lives and families in France to join the jihadi society. In an internet cafe, a woman—one of around 150 French women now in Syria, according to the France 2 report—on the phone explains to her mother back in France that she is determined to stay.

"I did not take the risk by coming here to go back to France," she says in perfect French. "I do not want to return because I am doing well here, Mom."

Women coming to Syria to get married or join their husbands are an essential element of the propaganda and strategy of IS's fundamentalist campaign, France 2

reports.

Bereaved families on the other end of the line are having trouble grasping the radical choice their daughters have made, according to the report. Especially when the stories they hear about IS treatment of women are so dire.

Sameera Salih Ali Al-Nuaimy, a human rights lawyer and activist, was seized from her home and tortured for five days by IS before being publicly executed in Mosul, Iraq, according to a statement today from the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq. UNAMI said she was taken on September 17 following posts on her Facebook page that were “critical of [IS's] destruction of places of religious and cultural significance” and convicted by a so-called “Shari’a court” for apostasy.

In interviews with *The Christian Science Monitor* Syrian women described the difficulty of living under the radical and unforgiving interpretation of Islamic law.

“Before Daash (IS), I was able to travel to Denmark and Beirut and all over Syria on my own. Now I can’t even go around the corner in Raqqa without having a male escort,” a 60-year-old woman returning to Raqqa with her two daughters from Turkey said. They were going back to Syria because they were unable to make a living in Istanbul.

Another woman said it was like having “20,000 Assads,” and added, “The worst is their women—they walk about carrying guns, grenades, and suicide belts. You are always worried that one of them will go off by accident.”